

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A bond coat for adhering a thermal barrier coating to an underlying metal substrate, the bond coat having an upper portion and which comprises:

- (1) a bond coating material selected from the group consisting of aluminide diffusion coating materials, overlay alloy coating materials other than a beta-phase NiAl intermetallic overlay coating material, and combinations thereof; and
- (2) a dispersion within at least the upper portion of the bond coat of particles having a particle size of about 2 microns or less and comprising a substantially insoluble bond coat strengthening compound, the amount of dispersed particles within the at least upper portion of the bond coat being sufficient to impart increased strengthening to the bond coat, wherein the bond coat strengthening compound is selected from the group consisting of zirconia, hafnia, ceria, lanthana, zirconium carbide, hafnium carbide, tantalum carbide, aluminum nitride, zirconium nitride, hafnium nitride, and mixtures thereof.

Claims 2-5 (Cancelled).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) The bond coat of claim 1 ~~3~~ wherein the amount of dispersed particles within the at least upper portion of the bond coat is at least about 0.1 volume percent.

Claim 7 (Original) The bond coat of claim 6 wherein the volume percent of dispersed particles is from about 0.1 to about 5.

Claim 8 (Original) The bond coat of claim 7 wherein the volume percent of dispersed particles is from about 0.5 to about 2.

Claim 9 (Original) The bond coat of claim 7 wherein the particle size is in the range of from about 1 to about 2000 nanometers.

Claim 10 (Original) The bond coat of claim 9 wherein the particle size is in the range of from about 10 to about 500 nanometers.

Claim 11 (Original) The bond coat of claim 1 wherein the aluminide diffusion coating material is selected from the group consisting of platinum aluminides and simple aluminides, and wherein overlay alloy coating material is selected from the group consisting of MCrAlX, wherein M is iron, cobalt, nickel, or alloys thereof, and wherein X is hafnium, zirconium, yttrium, tantalum, platinum, palladium, rhenium, silicon or a combination thereof.

Claim 12 (Original) The bond coat of claim 11 wherein the bond coating material is selected from the group consisting of aluminide diffusion coating materials, and combinations of aluminide diffusion coating materials and overlay coating materials.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended) A coated thermally protected article, which comprises:

- a. a metal substrate;
- b. a bond coat layer adjacent to and overlaying the metal substrate, the bond coat layer having an upper portion and comprising:
  - (1) a bond coating material selected from the group consisting of aluminide diffusion coating materials, overlay alloy coating materials, and combinations thereof; and
  - (2) a dispersion within at least the upper portion of the bond coat of particles having a particle size of about 2 microns or less and comprising a substantially insoluble bond coat strengthening compound, the amount of dispersed particles within the at least upper portion of the bond coat being sufficient to impart increased strengthening to the bond coat, wherein the bond coat strengthening compound is selected from the group consisting of zirconia, hafnia, ceria, lanthana, zirconium carbide, hafnium carbide, tantalum carbide, aluminum nitride, zirconium nitride, hafnium nitride, and mixtures thereof; and

- c. a thermal barrier coating layer adjacent to and overlaying the bond coat layer.

Claim 14 (Cancelled).

Claim 15 (Currently Amended) The article of claim 13 ~~14~~ wherein the bond coat strengthening compound is selected from the group consisting of ~~zirconia, hafnia, chromia, yttria, ceria, alumina, lanthana,~~ zirconium carbide, hafnium carbide, tantalum carbide, aluminum nitride, zirconium nitride, hafnium nitride, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 16 (Cancelled).

Claim 17 (Currently Amended) The article of claim 13 ~~16~~ wherein the amount of dispersed particles within the at least upper portion of the bond coat layer is at least about 0.1 volume percent.

Claim 18 (Cancelled).

Claim 19 (Original) The article of claim 17 wherein the particle size is in the range from about 1 to about 2000 nanometers.

Claim 20 (Original) The article of claim 19 wherein the particle size is in the range of from about 10 to about 500 nanometers.

Claim 21 (Original) The article of claim 17 wherein the bond coat layer has a thickness of from about 0.5 to about 10 mils and comprises an overlay alloy coating material selected from the group consisting of MCrAlX wherein M is iron, cobalt, nickel, or alloys thereof and wherein X is hafnium, zirconium, yttrium, tantalum, platinum, palladium, rhenium, silicon or a combination thereof.

Claim 22 (Original) The article of claim 17 wherein the bond coat layer has a thickness of from

about 0.5 to about 4 mils and comprises an aluminide diffusion coating material selected from the group consisting of platinum aluminides and simple aluminides.

Claim 23 (Original) The article of claim 17 which is a turbine engine component and wherein the thermal barrier coating has a thickness of from about 1 to about 100 mils.

Claim 24 (Original) The article of claim 23 which is a turbine shroud and wherein the thermal barrier coating layer has a thickness of from about 15 to about 30 mils.

Claim 25 (Original) The article of claim 23 which is a turbine airfoil and wherein the thermal barrier coating layer has a thickness of from about 3 to about 10 mils.

Claims 26-28 (Cancelled).

Claim 29 (Currently amended) The article of claim 17 ~~28~~ wherein the volume percent of dispersed particles is from about 0.1 to about 5.

Claim 30 (Original) The article of claim 29 wherein the volume percent of dispersed particles is from about 0.5 to about 2.

Claim 31 (Cancelled).

Claim 32 (Currently Amended) The article of claim 13 ~~34~~ wherein the aluminide diffusion coating material is selected from the group consisting of platinum aluminides and simple aluminides and wherein the overlay alloy coating material selected from the group consisting of MCrAlX wherein M is iron, cobalt, nickel, or alloys thereof and wherein X is hafnium, zirconium, yttrium, tantalum, platinum, palladium, rhenium, silicon or a combination thereof.

Claim 33 (Original) The article of claim 32 wherein the bond coat layer comprises an aluminide diffusion coating material and has a thickness of from about 0.5 to about 4 mils.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented) The bond coat of claim 1 wherein the particles are dispersed throughout the thickness of the bond coat layer.

Claim 35 (Cancelled).

Claim 36 (Currently Amended) The bond coat of claim 1 ~~35~~ wherein the bond coat strengthening compound is selected from the group consisting of zirconium carbide, hafnium carbide, tantalum carbide, aluminum nitride, zirconium nitride, hafnium nitride, and mixtures thereof.